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AUTHOR Bullard, Rebecca R.; Graffis, Mary M.; Hamp, Kathryn J.
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ABSTRACT

This study describes a program designed to increase student achievement in reading. The targeted population consisted of two first grade classes and one second grade class in a small central Illinois community. The median household income was in the lower range. Evidence of the existence of the problem included the April 2000 standard testing results, teacher observation, and low report card grades on which the targeted classes scored below grade level expectations in reading. Analysis of probable cause data revealed a number of reasons why low reading abilities might occur. Many teachers coming out of college are neither adequately prepared to teach reading nor are they prepared to teach reading to today's children. Children are coming from homes (often low-income) that have not put an emphasis on reading. A lack of time, both at home and at school devoted to reading, is a problem. Many children are not being instructed in phonemic awareness. This plays an important role in reading success. Also, textbooks have changed from controlled vocabulary to predictable or patterned books. This has made learning to read more difficult. A review of solution strategies suggested by professional literature, combined with an analysis of the settings of the problem, resulted in the selection of a four-component approach to teaching reading. Each of the following four areas were given equal time daily for the instruction of reading: word study, comprehension, fluency, and writing. Post intervention data indicated a marked improvement in reading abilities. Students were completely engaged in their learning, and students' different learning styles were better met with the more diverse activities. (Contains 6 figures, 8 tables, and 43 references. Appendixes contain a writing sample checklist; fluency timing materials; a survey instrument; an inventory checklist; and a weekly reading plan outline.) (Author/RS)

STRATEGIES AND SKILLS FOR READING IMPROVEMENT

Rebecca R. Bullard
Mary M. Graffis
Kathryn J. Hamp

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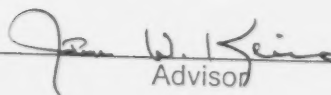
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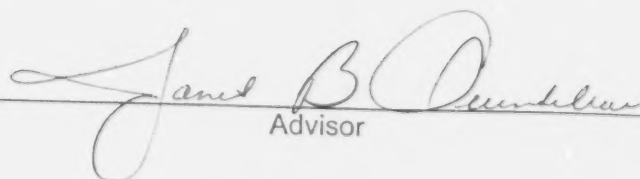
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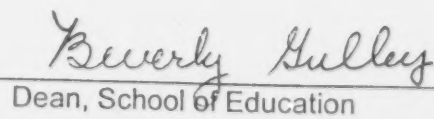
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ABSTRACT

This study describes a program designed to increase student achievement in reading. The targeted population consisted of two first grade classes and one second grade class in a small central Illinois community. The median household income was in the lower range. Evidence of the existence of the problem included the April 2000 standard testing results, teacher observation, and low report card grades on which the targeted classes scored below grade level expectations in reading.

Analysis of probable cause data revealed a number of reasons why low reading abilities might occur. Many teachers coming out of college are neither adequately prepared to teach reading nor are they prepared to teach reading to today's children. Children are coming from homes (often low-income) that have not put an emphasis on reading. A lack of time, both at home and at school devoted to reading, is a problem. Many children are not being instructed in phonemic awareness. This plays an important role in reading success. Also, textbooks have changed from controlled vocabulary to predictable or patterned books. This has made learning to read more difficult.

A review of solution strategies suggested by professional literature, combined with an analysis of the settings of the problem, resulted in the selection of a four-component approach to teaching reading. Each of the following four areas were given equal time daily for the instruction of reading: word study, comprehension, fluency, and writing.

Post intervention data indicated a marked improvement in reading abilities. Students were completely engaged in their learning, and students' different learning styles were better met with the more diverse activities.

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Chapter 1

General Statement of the Problem

The students of the targeted first and second grade classes are exhibiting low reading ability. Evidence of the existence of the problem includes the April 2000, standard testing results which is given upon exiting a grade level, teacher observation, and low report card grades on which the targeted classes scored below grade level expectations in reading.

Immediate Problem Context

The school's mission statement is: "It is the mission of the school, in partnership with home and community, that all students obtain the necessary knowledge, skills, and self-motivation to become life-long learners, socially responsible citizens, and active participants in their ever-changing world" (Mission Statement, 1997).

This project is being conducted in one (PreK-2nd grade) primary school, which serves one community within a village incorporation. The school serves 200 children. The racial-ethnic background of the students is 98.4% White, 1.3% Black, and 0.3% Hispanic. The school is made up of 46.8% low-income students. The students' attendance rate is 94.5%. It has a mobility rate of 27.4% and a chronic truancy rate of 2.1% (School Report Card, 1999).

The school is a one level brick building with a gymnasium that also functions as a cafeteria area. At the edge of the school property are woods. Many days in the fall or spring, groundhogs, deer, and even a fox can be seen. The building will be undergoing construction during the 2000-2001 school year. The district will add eight classrooms and another gymnasium to the facility. When construction is finished, the district's third and fourth grade school will close. The third and fourth grade classes will be incorporated into the PK-2 building.

There are presently twelve regular division classrooms, one pre-kindergarten classroom, two special education classrooms, one Title 1 reading program classroom, one music classroom, one teachers' lounge, and a principal's office in the PK-2 building. The staff consists of thirteen regular division teachers including the pre-kindergarten teacher, eight specialized teachers, one principal, and a secretary. Of the teaching staff 100 percent are White, and one teacher has a master's degree. Included in this group are three men and ten women. The time devoted to teaching reading-language arts is 750 minutes, mathematics 200 minutes, social studies 150 minutes, science 150 minutes, healthful living 125 minutes, and fine arts 25 minutes per week.

The school offers many programs. Each classroom has music twice a week for 35 minutes, and a physical education teacher conducts P.E. twice a week for 30 minutes. The pre-kindergarten program, Successfully Teaching At-risk Students (S.T.A.R.S), offers a half-day program that meets four days a week. The support staff includes a speech therapist, occupational therapist, physical therapist, and a technology director. The health staff consists of employees from a local hospital. It includes a nurse practitioner, medical assistant, and a social worker.

Other programs include Title I reading, which is self-contained in first grade and inclusive in second grade. There is a before and after school latchkey program. The school offers a breakfast and lunch program servicing all paying students as well as offering free and reduced

lunches. The school participates yearly in the Pizza Hut Book-It program from October through March. This at home program encourages students to read a set number of pages or books a month. Upon reaching the set goal for the month, the students return a completed Book-It form, which is signed by a parent for a personal pan pizza coupon from Pizza Hut. Since there is not a library in the school, children obtain books at the community library, which is across the street from the school. The school has a parents' club which raises money through fundraisers, Market Day products, and district-wide weekly Bingo. The group also provides parental assistance with parties, field trips, educational assemblies, and the "Picture Person," a volunteer who shares with the children fine arts.

Classroom A

Classroom A has approximately 20 first grade children. One wall has a fire door and windows that let in the hot morning sun; it looks out over a grassy field with two ball diamonds. Another wall has a dry erase board and an area for daily calendar time. The carpeted area is next to this wall where the children gather for large group instruction. The next wall has a large bulletin board where the word wall can be seen. The word wall contains the most commonly used words in reading. The last wall has a dry erase board and a partial chalkboard. Under the chalkboard a long table is located for the writing center. Grouped into a center are four computers (all have Internet access). The television monitor with Internet access is attached high on a wall with a computer under it. Also found in the classroom are areas for the library, science, and listening centers. The individual side desks are arranged in four groups in the center of the room. During the day, the hallway door is often closed because it is located close to the bathrooms and temporary playground doors. Students from other classrooms form lines close to the door.

Classroom B

Classroom B has approximately 20 first grade children. It has windows along one wall and includes a playground door. It borders the playground and receives recess noise and afternoon sun. There are bulletin boards or chalkboards on the other three walls. The room has five computers, four networked to the Internet. There is also a carpeted area with a corner mounted television monitor. The students have individual side desks, which can be easily grouped. The teacher's desk is at the back of the room.

Classroom C

Classroom C is a second grade classroom. It is a large rectangular room with an addition being built onto the building adjacent to the classroom. Construction will be ongoing during the entire 2000-2001 school year. There are twenty-one individual, side storage student desks. The room is arranged in centers. The centers consist of five computers (all are networked to the Internet), a television monitor attached on a wall, a listening center, reading center, and science center. The reading center is carpeted so all of the children can gather together. It is stocked with books of various degrees of difficulty and educational games. There are two ten-foot bulletin boards and a ten-foot chalkboard. Several aquariums are located throughout the room with fish, frogs, and turtles in them.

District

The school district is comprised of three separate schools: each building has a principal, a secretary, and teachers. One school houses pre-kindergarten through second grade. Another school has third and fourth grades. The third school has fifth through eighth grade. The district feeds into two local high schools in neighboring towns. The administration for the district is housed in a separate building and consists of a superintendent, a secretary, and a bookkeeper.

Administrative meetings are held weekly with the superintendent and principals. School Board meetings occur monthly.

The district is comprised of 772 students. Of these, 98.1% are White, 0.9% are Black, 0.5% are Hispanic, 0.3% are Asian/Pacific Islander, and 0.3% are Native American. Low-income students make up 43.7% of the district. The attendance is 94.8%; mobility is 22.1%; chronic truancy is 0.8%.

The district teachers have an average of 10.4 years experience, with 92.5% having bachelors' degrees and 7.6% having a master's degree and above. All of the teachers are White; 7.6% are male and 92.5% are female. The teacher's average salary is \$29,956. The pupil-teacher ratio is 18.4:1. The average administrator's salary is \$55,639 with a pupil-administrator ratio of 154.4:1. The operating expenditure per pupil is \$4,715 (School Report Card, 1999).

Community

According to the 1990 census data, there are 1669 families with a total population of 5,938. The town has a historical fort that sits on the bluff above the river. There are no large businesses located in the town. There are four fast food businesses, a dollar store, a few small shops, offices, several churches, and a library. The closest hospital is within a 15-20 minute drive. The neighboring community has a junior college that is also 15 minutes away.

The community offers limited recreational activities in the summer, baseball, and softball. There is a campground located at the local historic site. The facility accommodates tents and recreational travel trailers and offers a large open area for outdoor activities.

According to the 1990 census, the median household income was \$25,058. The Claritas 1996 Reside Data states the median age was 34, and renters accounted for 31% of 2,259 households. According to the Economic Development Council for the area, statistics indicate

those residents over the age of 65 and/or retired amount to 60% of the town's population. Low-income residents account for 50% of the population. According to the 1990 census data, 35% of the children do not live in the traditional family setting with both parents. Ten percent of the students are being raised by grandparents. More than 10% of the community (age 25 and over) do not have a ninth grade education level. Twenty-eight percent do not have a high school diploma or its equivalent.

National Context of the Problem

Students with reading difficulties have gained national media attention. The media has reported low-test scores that have alarmed parents, school, boards, and educators. Learning to read is critical to a child's overall well being. If a youngster does not learn to read in our literacy-driven society, hope for a fulfilling, productive life diminishes. This may affect him financially as well as emotionally. In short, difficulties in learning to read are not only an educational problem, they constitute a serious public health concern (Lyon, 1998).

Good readers are phonemically aware, understand the alphabetic principle, apply these skills in a rapid and fluent manner, possess strong vocabularies, have syntactical and grammatical skills, and relate reading to their own experiences (Lyon, 1998). Pre-school children who have not been read to at an early age do not have a strong sense of reading. They have not been exposed to stimulating literacy and language experiences that have aided in developing vocabulary, nor do they have print awareness and an awareness of sound and language patterns. Such children often start school greatly behind. This can cause long-term patterns that are hard to change. To make reading habit-forming, the goal is to educate parents to read with their children beginning at an early age. If more parents understood the long-term positive impact, they would make reading with their children a priority (Richardson, 1998).

The difficulty of finding time to read with their children is only one aspect today's busy parents encounter. Another is understanding the current learning standards. Parents find the new mandated state testing and standards confusing. They are not sure of what the tests mean or what is measured by them (Ravitch, 1996). In order to meet these standards, most school districts still depend on textbooks to provide their curriculum. Recently the trend has been that a few large companies supply tests and textbooks to most school districts. Because of these limited suppliers, most of the textbooks are similar in nature regardless of the publisher, and most tests are based on the same multiple-choice approach. This informal national curriculum has proven to be not good enough. It is mainly geared to minimal competencies, and expectations about what students should learn are frequently low and unchallenging (Ravitch, 1996).

Educators know beyond a doubt that there is no single best way to teach every youngster to read even though some state legislatures try. For instance, some are mandating phonics for all. Educators have learned that children written off as unreachable are capable of learning.

Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences (M.I.) has shown the world that people do not have a single, fixed intelligence. Tests given to children have only skimmed the surface about the differences among kids (Checkley, 1999). His theory demonstrates that paper and pencil tests do not tap into the intelligences of children nor can we accurately measure children's intelligences since these tests measure only to one or two specific intelligences.

For several decades American students have been registering weak or flat achievement in every subject area. Many politicians, educators, and parents feel that expectations in our schools need changing (Ravitch, 1996). Teaching children to read is the key to subsequent educational success and should be the most important priority of elementary schools (Honig, 1997). Research as found that poor readers spend less time reading than good readers and that much of poor

reader's instructional time is spent practicing skills, not in actual reading. Teachers must be encouraged to monitor their own classrooms and assess their own teaching strategies to find ways to increase children's reading time (McNinch, Schaffer, Cambell, & Rakes, 1999). Too often a teacher realizes their teacher preparation was insufficient to meet the instructional needs of his or her students, particularly reading literacy (Brownell & Walther-Thomas, 1999).

In debating the best way to achieve reading success, one of the most important variables is an individual classroom teacher who understands how children acquire literacy and the role he or she plays helping each child achieve his or her potential. Helping teachers see possibilities in their teaching also helps their students (Guided Reading, 1996).

CHAPTER 2

PROBLEM DOCUMENTATION

Problem Evidence

In order to document the evidence of poor reading skills, the teacher-researchers chose to collect writing samples, fluency timings, and time spent reading surveys (Appendices A, B, and C). In addition, Classrooms A and B have administered inventory checklists (Appendix D) which included letter recognition, consonant phonemes, and readiness vocabulary. Classroom C administered a Star Reading test on the computer for each student.

Of the 40 students in Classrooms A and B, 26 were involved in the process over the sixteen-week time period. Of the 22 in Classroom C, 16 were also involved. The children who are not involved did not return permission slips.

Summaries of the average score for the inventory readiness vocabulary test for Classrooms A and B are presented in Figure 1.

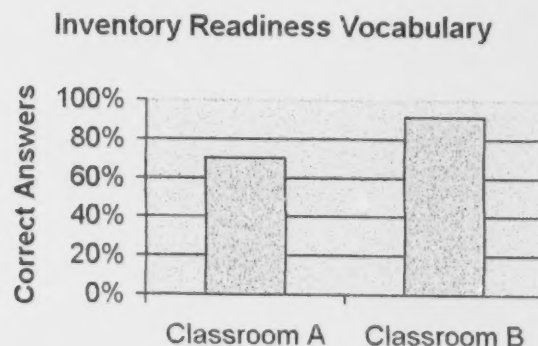


Figure 1. Inventory Readiness Vocabulary

In Figure 1, the first grade students were tested at the beginning of the year on twenty readiness vocabulary words that were taught in kindergarten. The average correct for Classroom A was 70 percent. The average for Classroom B was 91 percent. Classroom A was tested early in the week without any review. This classroom needs more vocabulary review. Classroom B was tested later in the week after some review of vocabulary words. This may explain the higher average.

Figure 2 represents the students' average score on the recognition of the 26 alphabet letters.

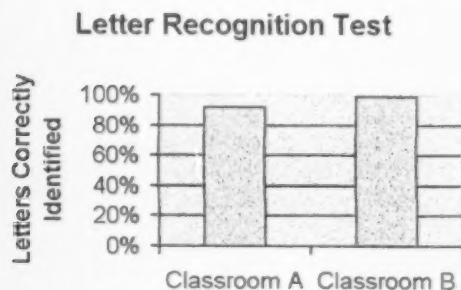


Figure 2. Letter Recognition Test

Figure 2 represents the correct percentage of letters identified in the two classrooms. Classroom A identified 92 percent of the twenty-six alphabet letters. Classroom B identified 99 percent. Both classrooms have sufficient mastery of letter recognition. Classroom A was tested early in the week without review. Classroom B was tested later in the week after reviewing the letters. This may explain the higher score for Classroom B.

Figure 3 represents the students' average score for providing the sounds of the 26 letter phonemes.

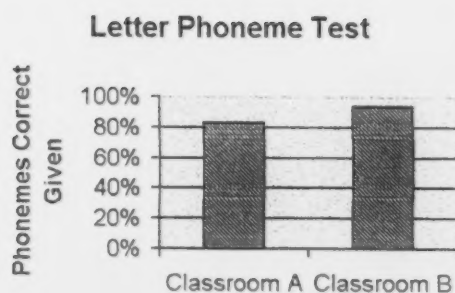


Figure 3. Letter Phoneme Test

Of the twenty-six letter phonemes represented in Figure 3, Classroom A knew 83 percent and Classroom B knew 94 percent. Classroom A needs more letter phoneme review. They had poor retention from kindergarten. Classroom B had sufficient retention of the letter phonemes.

Classroom C took the Star Reading computer program test, which determined each student's reading level. The entire test was performed on the computer. The multiple-choice test, which is in a fill in the blank sentence format, continues to test the student until the student shows a frustration level. The results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Star Reading Test Results

<u>Students' Individual Reading Level</u>	<u>n=16 Students</u>
Kindergarten, 1 month	4
Kindergarten, 4 months	1
Kindergarten, 8 months	1
Kindergarten, 9 months	1
First grade, 2 months	1
First grade, 6 months	2
First grade, 9 months	1
Second grade, 7 months	1
Third grade, 2 months	1
Third grade, 3 months	1
Third grade, 5 months	1
Fourth grade, 0 months	1

Of the sixteen students involved in the research, four are reading at 0.1, one at a 0.4, one at 0.8, one at 0.9, one at 1.2, two at 1.6, one at 1.9, one at 2.7, one at 3.2, one at 3.5, and one at 4.0. Three-fourths of the class is reading below grade level and one-fourth is above the expected 2.0 grade level. There is no one at grade level. This means that review of first grade skills is essential for success of the lower achieving students. The higher achieving students need to be challenged.

Students were given a personal inventory related to the number of minutes weekly that reading takes place in the home. Data was collected and presented in Figure 4.

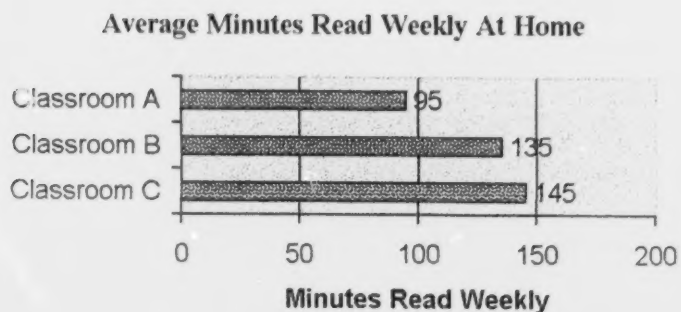


Figure 4. Average Minutes Read Weekly At Home

On an average, Students in Classroom A were involved 95 minutes a week reading at home. In Classroom B, the average time students were involved reading at home was 135 minutes. Classroom C spent an average of 145 minutes a week reading at home. These minutes were measured by parent time spent surveys for students in first and second grades. It is the opinion of the research teachers that parents may have exaggerated the time for some students, but the number of minutes is not unreasonable for these grade levels.

Students wrote a content sentence(s) for the weekly reading story. The criteria involved writing about the subject matter and using complete sentence(s) with correct capitalization and punctuation. Data was collected and is presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Writing Samples

Content Writing Areas	Number of Students Who Were Successful		
Subject Matter	12	12	16
Complete thought	12	10	12
Capitalization	8	9	13
Punctuation	10	3	15
	Classroom A	Classroom B	Classroom C
	13 Children	13 Children	16 Children

When asked to write about the subject matter, 12 children in Classroom A, 12 in Classroom B, and 16 in classroom C were successful. When asked to write in complete sentences, 12 children in Classroom A, 10 children in Classroom B, and 12 children in Classroom C were able to complete the task. When asked to use correct capitalization, 8 children in Classroom A, 9 children in Classroom B, and 13 children in Classroom C were successful. Last, 10 children in Classroom A, 3 children in Classroom B, and 15 children in Classroom C correctly completed punctuation. Most of the students can stay on the subject matter and write in complete thoughts, however, capitalization and punctuation must still be emphasized.

One-minute fluency timings were done at the students' different reading levels. The students read aloud for one minute and the teacher recorded the number of words correct. These are presented in Figure 5.

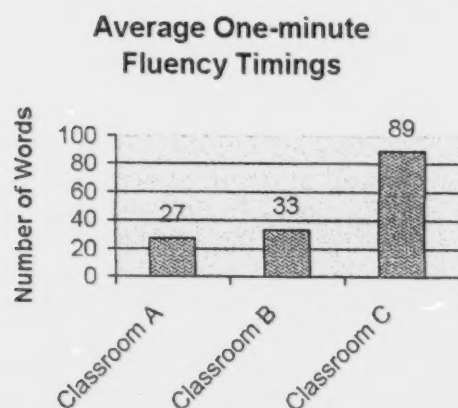


Figure 5. Average One-minute Fluency Timings

The students in Classroom A read an average of 27 words per minute. In Classroom B the students read an average of 33 words per minute. An average of 89 words per minute were read by Classroom C. There are no standards for what the children need to show fluency. The goal is to gain words per minute with each fluency timing. Classroom A shows an apparent lack of ability to read words for fluent reading. Classroom B demonstrates more emergent reading skills or strategies than Classroom A. Classroom C shows that they have adequate word knowledge to read grade level material. The differences between first grade and second grade reading abilities show remarkable gains in reading from the beginning of first to the beginning of second grade.

Probable Causes

Professional literature suggests numerous reasons why children have reading difficulties and low test scores. It also suggests that many teachers coming out of college have not been adequately prepared to teach reading.

Children are coming from homes (often low-income) that have not put an emphasis on reading.

By age 1 or 2, in fact, children should be regularly read to by parents. The U.S. commission on Reading examined more than 10,000 studies and issued a landmark report stating, "The single most important activity for ...eventual success in reading is reading aloud to children. (Routman, 1997, p.78)

It can be difficult for children without this background to have early reading success.

Readers' experiential and conceptual backgrounds are extremely important in vocabulary development. Background experiences are what readers use to develop, expand, and refine concepts that words represent." Without the early preparation to begin reading the learning process can be delayed which is frustrating to the children and teacher. (Rupley, Logan & Nichols, 1998-1999, p. 481)

Teachers are coming out of college not prepared to teach reading to today's children. In teacher workshops and inservices, teachers report that they "...seldom saw real strategy teaching either in their K-12 schooling or college reading methods classroom" (Dowhower, 1999, p. 673). "A recent national survey of elementary school teachers revealed that many were unsure of how to meet the needs of readers who struggle" (Duffy-Hester, 1999, p. 481). It seems that teachers have confused strategy teaching with instruction techniques.

Phonemic awareness plays an important role in reading success. "Nearly 20% of our students do not develop threshold levels of phonemic awareness in kindergarten" (Honig, 1997, p. 18). Children may have a difficult time distinguishing sounds or manipulating and sequencing sounds. "Unfortunately, about a sixth of our children have phonological wiring problems" (Honig, 1997, p. 18).

There are numerous reading methods that promise to fix reading problems. Where do teachers begin? What is the correct teaching method? The whole language theory is a holistic response to text which does not offer enough direct instruction (Strickland, 1998). Balanced reading is another way to fix reading problems, but everyone who writes about balanced reading has a different view as to what is "balanced reading" (Fitzgerald, 1999). The four-block approach is balanced by the instructional method, but it is difficult to manage. It does not have whole group instruction from a single text and the children are at many different reading levels (Cunningham, 2000). Many educators teach reading just one way and we know without a doubt that there is no one way that is best to teach children how to read (Carbo, 1997).

Another issue is lack of time devoted to reading in elementary schools. During the planned reading time, teachers focus their instruction on lecturing to students instead of providing time for children to interact with hands on learning of the skills. Students spend "...only 10% of their day in oral or silent reading activities" (Tarrent, 1999).

Literature suggests that time spent reading must exceed time spent talking and writing about reading for instruction to be most successful. Poor readers spend less time reading than good readers and that much of poor reader's instructional time is spent practicing skills, not in actual reading." (McNinch, Schaffer, Cambell & Rakes, 1999, p. 90)

Phonics and vocabulary can be another reason for reading difficulties. Reading "is often projected as a phonics debate (i.e., too much or too little phonics, depending on your perspective)" (Duffy & Hoffman, 1999, p. 10). Vocabulary is often taught through repetition and drill. Much too often students are unmotivated word learners (Blachowicz, 1998). "Learning to read is difficult. It depends upon both learning to read words and having the

background knowledge of concepts and the world to understand text" (Juel & Minder-Cupp, 2000, p. 52).

Comprehension is another area for concern. Even though times have changed some teaching methods have not. Round robin reading (calling on students to read orally one after another) is still often used for classroom management. This is not an effective comprehension strategy (Optiz & Rasinski, 1998). Many teachers are assessing comprehension instead of teaching comprehension strategies. "Even with good teacher preparation, confusion between assessment and direct teaching of comprehension is still evident" (Dowhower, 1999, p. 673).

High success in the development of reading is linked with writing (Morrow, Tracey, GeeWoo & Pressley, 1999). At-risk readers and writers will have difficulty writing using invented spelling because the students lack phonemic awareness and letter-sound association (Cunningham & Cunningham, 1992). When teachers have children write, it is usually in journals that reflect upon a story. The issue that is overlooked is "...lack of awareness of audience needs and of whether one's writing will communicate." Students need to be guided in expressing their ideas in writing. Writing is not being taught in an interactive way; instead teachers use isolated mini lessons (Button, Johnson & Furgerson, 1996, p. 49).

CHAPTER 3

THE SOLUTION STRATGY

Literature Review

There is not a "Perfect Method" of teaching! Duffy & Hoffman (1999) suggest the concept of a perfect method of teaching is not the answer. The solution comes from teachers who know and understand several methods of teaching and realize which ones work with their students.

Effective teachers realize that different students learn by different techniques. Students also learn at different times, and these ideas are best understood by teachers who are flexible in their teaching styles. A good teacher should be able to describe him or herself as one who understands the needs and abilities of the students and uses methods of teaching that will meet those needs.

Marie Carbo seems to agree with Duffy and Hoffman. Carbo is Founder and Executive Director of the National Reading Styles Institute. Carbo (1997) believes there are several reading styles. Not all children learn best in the same style. According to Carbo, children will learn to read if teaching techniques match up with their styles of reading. By observing students and by using an inventory list, teachers can determine a student's reading style. When the students learn and understand their styles, they can work through their strengths. Carbo also lets her readers know that this kind of reading program takes work on the teacher's part.

Learning styles appears to be a "hot" topic these days, and according to Hodgkin and Wooliscroft (1997), classroom styles also plays an important part in students' abilities to learn. In their article, Hodgkin and Wooliscroft suggest that noise, light, temperature, design stimuli, centers, mobility and snack time are all important in a child's ability to learn. Children are given their own space in which to go to read. They may sit in a corner on the floor, or they may prefer to sit at a desk, but the choice is theirs. The children are taught that they are expected to learn. If they abuse the freedom to move around and choose their spot, then they lose that right. These classrooms do not develop overnight. It takes three to five years for a teacher to create a learning styles classroom.

A balanced reading program as described by Ruple, Logan & Nichols (1998-99) includes teacher directed instruction, a variety of opportunities for students to utilize their knowledge of words and exposure to reading and writing in many different texts. Vocabulary words should come directly from the text that children are studying. A variety of activities should be available to the students to engage them in learning new words. These activities will allow children to remember and process the meanings of the words. As mentioned above, there is no one perfect method of instruction to teach students the meaning of words. Strategies that use the senses, visual aids, movement and other forms of learning, will allow all students to understand and remember the meaning of vocabulary words.

Another way of helping children with reading is the idea of twin texts in the classrooms. "Twin texts are two books, one fiction and one non-fiction (informational), on the same (or related) topic. While the nonfiction book answers questions in a more straightforward manner, the story structure of a fiction book may be less difficult for children to comprehend. Teacher can integrate language arts, science, social studies, and other content areas by using children's

literature as a bridge" (Camp, 2000, p. 400). An example of twin texts would be the fiction book Amazing Grace by Mary Hoffman and the non-fiction book The Story of Ruby Bridges by Robert Coles. Both are stories of personal bravery and believing in oneself.

A balance between reading instruction and reading practice is another way for students to discover the joys of reading according to Dorothy Fowler (1998). In an article, Fowler talks about giving the students time to read their favorite books alone, then time to read with a partner, and finally coming together to read as a class. She includes a phonics lesson in their group time. Connections will be made to the phonics lesson as they read materials throughout the day. Children are encouraged to help each other in a positive way as they work with partners or in-groups.

Phonics has been a topic of discussion among educators for the past several decades. Several of these educators agree that phonics is important, but that it needs to be emphasized in a literature-rich environment. In an article by G. Reid Lyon (1998), Lyon reports that practicing phonics skills within texts is crucial to a child's learning. Children must acquire fluency while learning decoding and word recognition. If this does not happen, then children will not understand and enjoy what they are reading. Regie Routman (2000) agrees with Lyon. Routman also recommends that phonics be taught through literature. An example given was the book Caps for Sale. After reading through the book once, the teacher has the children read it with her pointing out words with *ed* endings. This is far more meaningful to the children than doing a phonics paper where the children copy ten words and add *ed* to the ends of the words. Using literature to teach phonics allows children to understand that *ed* at the end of the word makes it mean past tense.

"Using reciprocal teaching, authentic literature, strategic questioning, and discussion empowers both children and teachers" (Dermody and Speaker, 1999, p.5). This article examined strategies used to improve students' comprehension. Another approach to reading comprehension is discussed by Sarah L. Dowhower (1999) in an article supporting a strategy that uses what she calls a "Comprehension Framework." This framework includes a pre-reading phase, an active reading phase, and a post-reading phase. The framework is designed to achieve two goals: students internalizing and self-regulating the strategies and helping the teacher build good planning and instruction.

Candace Bos, professor of special education at the University of Arizona, stated "Overall, the guiding principle that I think teachers need to incorporate into their reading instruction and into any instruction is 'informed, flexible teaching'" (Brownell & Walther-Thomas, 1999, p.1). Specifically Bos suggested using multiple approaches, including several techniques and strategies. She also suggested presenting and demonstrating information and material to the students in multiple ways. This allows students with different abilities and ways of learning to be able to learn. In the same article, Linda Jones, a former second-grade teacher in Arizona used the WH strategy. This strategy is used as a guide for journal writing. It gives the students a set of WH questions to help motivate their thinking and writing.

The questions include:

- Who is this about?
- What is it about?
- Where did it happen?
- When did it happen?
- Why did it happen?

- How did it happen?

The sentences are given to the students to keep on their desktops to inspire their writings.

"There are various means currently being researched and practiced in order to capture fluency for today's students. These methods for developing fluency include modeling, repeated reading, paired oral reading, the Oral Recitation Lesson, and choral reading" (Richards, 2000, p. 534). According to Zutell and Rasinski (1991), when choosing text to increase students' fluency, the instructional level should be highly considered. Also, texts that have a natural language pattern should be chosen. Books with high interest and low vocabulary inhibit fluent reading. When trying to get students to read fluently, appropriate methods as well as appropriate materials are essential.

Fluency is another area in which children struggle. Children who do not learn to read fluently also struggle with comprehension, as suggested by Hasbrouck, Ihnot and Rogers (1999). Comprehension is the understanding of passages. If the children are stumbling over words, they do not fully comprehend what they are reading. This article suggests having the students read along with a model or listening to a tape so they can hear fluency demonstrated. Repeated reading of the same passages and monitoring the students is also recommended. Mastropieri, Leinart and Scruggs (1999) agree with these recommendations. Besides repeated reading they suggest peer tutoring. When students read with partners, half of the class are reading at one time. Using computer programs and previewing text material before actually reading the passages are two more ways of increasing fluency that were recommended in this article.

In an article by Bill Honig (1997), he suggests that a well-balanced reading program must include ways for children to learn automatic word recognition and comprehension. Many schools have put word recognition aside, believing that children will figure out the word by the

rest of the passage. But Honig believes that comprehension will be better acquired if the students automatically know certain frequently used words. This could be done with word walls, flashcards, vocabulary bingo games, etc.

Ann Porter Gifford wrote the article "Broadening Concepts Through Vocabulary Development" (2000) in which she describes different techniques to teach vocabulary development. Gifford suggests ways to use synonyms, antonyms, parts of speech and association to help children develop strong vocabulary skills. She also uses the Five W's (who, what, when, where, and why) to aid with vocabulary.

"There is such a difference between kids who are read to at home, whose parents take time to talk to them and help them learn the ABC's, and the kids who go home to an empty house," notes Sharon Suskin, reading coordinator for New Jersey's South Brunswick School District and reading specialist at the district's Cambridge Elementary School" (Richardson, 1998, p. 5). According to Suskin, the support that children receive at home in reading becomes apparent the moment they pick up a book at school. Children who are read to at home and are taught the alphabet come to school with an understanding that print has meaning in a book, and that there is more to the book than just the pictures. Events such as "Read Across America" are good, but they promote reading as a family once a year. Richardson's article suggests that monthly programs would be more effective in promoting family literacy.

Literacy-rich classrooms stimulate language and reading development according to Dickinson and DiGisi (1998). These authors believe that classrooms with centers, reading corners, books, poems, posters, maps, etc., encourage literacy development. They also believe that writing should be part of the science and social studies curriculum. The article goes on to say that reading and writing should be taught together and not as separate subjects.

Finally, an issue that has come under discussion has been how much time should be spent reading. In a study reported by McNich, Schaffer, Cambell and Rakes (1999), teachers in grades 3, 4, and 5 agreed that more classroom time should be spent actually reading text rather than doing activities that support reading instruction.

Project Objectives and Processes

As a result of increased instructional emphasis on reading, during the period of September 2000 to January 2001, first and second grade students from the targeted classes will increase their skills in word study, comprehension, fluency, and writing. These skills will be measured by a reading pretest and posttest, weekly writings, text prepared tests, and reading fluency timings.

In order to accomplish the project objectives the following processes are necessary:

1. A series of activities to increase spelling, phonics, and vocabulary skills.
2. Centers will include computers, a reading area, a listening center, reading games, and activities to enhance reading comprehension.
3. Activities will include modeled reading, partner reading, silent reading and guided reading to improve reading fluency.
4. Activities to increase students' skills in writing include form, style and writing as a form of communication.

Project Action Plan

Word Study

Weekly spelling words from the district's spelling curriculum.

Phonics and decoding skills are dictated from the reading text. This involves the blending of phonemes.

Word wall includes high utility words, sight words, or content words.

Language skills are dictated by the reading text. This would include sentence construction, punctuation, grammar, parts of speech, etc...

DOL – Daily Oral Language consists of correcting sentences as a group and justifying the corrections.

Comprehension

Pre-reading skills include prior knowledge, building background, focusing on a specific strategy, predicting, and visual imagery.

Active reading includes setting the purpose, silent reading, and discussion of the story to help children comprehend.

Post-reading skills include recalling content, reader responses, extension of the text, strategy use and transfer, and informal or self-assessment.

Fluency

During modeled reading students listen to stories read by an adult or recorded on a tape

Paired oral readings will have students reading to a partner.

Silent reading consists of students reading silently from a reading selection of their choice

During guided reading the teacher will observe individual students while reading in small groups individually to assess reading fluency.

Repeated readings allow students to read the same story several times.

Choral readings involve students reading aloud together. Poems are often used.

Writing

Letter formation is the proper use of line and spacing.

Writing styles consist of expository, narrative, and persuasive styles.

Journal writing can be flexible depending on the purpose.

Creative writing often reflects the theme of the story or another topic.

Weekly content writing from a prompt will be collected and evaluated to show each student's progress.

The reading activities will be written on an outline for a weekly reading lesson plan.

(Appendix E)

Methods of Assessment

In order to assess the effects of the intervention a pretest and posttest will be given. The first grade classes will use an inventory checklist, and the second grade class will use a computer program, which evaluates the students' reading levels. A journal writing sample will be taken at the beginning of the intervention and then taken once a week to monitor progress. A reading fluency timing will be given at the onset of the intervention and then once a week following the weekly reading story to measure words read orally per minute.

CHAPTER 4

PROJECT RESULTS

Historical Description of the Intervention

The objective of this research project was to increase reading ability of the students. In attempting to do this, the teacher-researchers incorporated a four-component reading approach: word study, comprehension, fluency, and writing. Guided reading and reading centers were also used to enhance the four-component reading approach.

The Intervention Strategies

The intervention strategies included a four-component approach, guided reading, and reading centers. These were used daily with equal time given to each area. All classrooms followed this plan exactly and did not deviate from the strategies.

Word Study

Word study consisted of activities that increased vocabulary, phonics, and spelling skills. These interrelated areas were presented in ways that engaged the children and drew from different learning styles.

When teaching vocabulary recognition, flashcards were often used in a multitude of activities. Students did self-study, studied with partners, did one-minute timings, and played games of concentration. Vocabulary bingo reinforced both new and old vocabulary. The current stories' scrolling vocabulary lists in the form of PowerPoint presentations were presented on wall-

mounted monitors. Vocabulary was further enhanced when students individually or in groups defined words from their glossaries and alphabetized them.

When decoding words, students were taught to look for phonemic chunks (ie. -ick, -ed, -ong), blends, and digraphs. These were done in a variety of ways such as "find your partner," an activity that involved finding another child to complete a word or match the same pattern. "Carouselling" moves students every few minutes from station to station around the room. Each station has paper with a word chunk or letter blend on it. The students generate a list of words for the given pattern. Drama played a part in acting out some vocabulary words such as verbs. Breaking words down into smaller parts included games such as "Hangman" and using "Making Words" by Patricia Cunningham, which involved manipulating individual letter tiles to make words.

Students used visual clues such as word webs and other graphic organizers when brainstorming vocabulary for themes or a specific skill like contractions. They often wrote a sentence for each new vocabulary word and illustrated it. Students read new stories, they wrote unknown vocabulary on a clipboard, discussed the words, and revisited them when the story was finished. After revisiting, the students wrote sentences for the vocabulary words, which did not have to relate to the story. Students were often asked to write sentences about stories and to illustrate the key parts. Assignments included using picture books to write a story based on the illustrations, to write in speech bubbles what the characters might say, and simply to write a sequential story. The main idea of a story was given and students had to write two or three supports with partners. Eventually the students did this independently.

Comprehension

Many strategies were used to help improve the students' comprehension. In the first grade classrooms, the children looked at the illustrations in picture books and then wrote sentence sentences about the story or about what the characters might be saying. In the second grade classroom, the children would have a chapter book read to them. Then they would illustrate their favorite scene from the story and write a paragraph about it. Students in all classes practiced finding the main idea and supporting details by using a variety of graphic organizers. This also helped the students with paragraph writing as well as comprehension. The use of graphic organizers, KWL charts, or picture walks checked prior knowledge.

Different sequencing activities were used to enhance comprehension. Some activities included putting typed sentences in story order and illustrating a sequence of events. Another way of checking for comprehension was for the teacher to read a story to the children and stop during the story to allow them to make inferences and draw conclusions. Venn diagrams were often used for twin texts or similar stories. Children would compare and contrast stories. Many strategies were used every day to help the students comprehend what they were reading whether it was during reading class or any other subject area.

Fluency

Fluency is described as reading in a flowing and effortless manner using expression. Fluent readers have better comprehension and enjoy reading experiences. Many activities were used to build fluency with the students. Reading to the wall seemed to be an enjoyable experience for the students. There were often shouts of joy and rushing bodies to get to their favorite reading spots on the wall, garbage can, bookshelf, or desk. The students then read in a whisper to the inanimate object. Another way to practice fluency was partner reading. Partners would read the

story to each other and then tell each other the things that they did well for fluency. Tape recorders were used with each story. A cassette tape modeled fluent reading for the children. Then the tape would be put in the learning centers for the children to listen and read along with. Drop everything and read (DEAR) time was used to practice fluency. The children would choose a book that was of interest to them and read to themselves silently or read to a partner in a quiet whisper. Books were provided so the children could read at their instructional level. This gave them success with reading fluently. Small groups of three to four students practiced choral reading with the story of the week, and then the whole class would come together for choral reading. Again, this gave success to the less fluent reader. The students also spent time silently reading the story of the week to help them become fluent readers. Poems were used for fluency practice and each week the students received a new poem to learn and add to their poem book collection. Time was spent practicing the poem or rereading favorite poems to themselves or to partners. Fluency timing exercises were given by Classroom C for fluency practice. The children read for one minute and counted how many words were read correctly.

Writing

Students were given many opportunities to express themselves through writing. Journal writing was a favorite part of the day because the students were always asking, "Is it journal time?" Sometimes prompts were used, but other days the children were given free choice for their writing. Sometimes they would be given a content area to write about that required using prior knowledge. During a Charlotte's Web unit in Classroom C, the teacher or guest reader would read two or three chapters every day, then the students would write a summary paragraph about what was read that day. The students would self-edit their papers which means checking for capitalization, punctuation and spelling errors, then turn them in for the teacher to proofread.

The students would then write their final drafts. This was done every day for two weeks. The papers were then stapled together in order for a complete summary of the novel.

In all classrooms webs for main idea and details were used to help children write paragraphs. In the reading series books, there is always a page about the author after each story. The students learned to take notes about the author as the teacher read the page. The children would then write a short paragraph about each author to make an author book.

Writing was also provided at centers. The students wrote stories, letter, invitations, thank you notes, and poems.

"Daily News" was a time that all of the children seemed to look forward to. The children would dictate news about themselves or their families for the teacher to record on chart paper. Sometimes regular paper would be used and placed under the Viz Cam camera for viewing on the television monitor. The children were then called on to come up and find different parts of speech, spelling words, vocabulary words, or anything the teacher determined as that day's lesson. This was an excellent way to teach phonics and grammar, and the children enjoyed it because they were sharing real life experiences.

Guided Reading

During a guided reading lesson the teacher used books at the children's instructional level for mini lessons on reading skills and fluency practice. The small groups were kept flexible with three to five children in a group. Individual instruction was given to each child as they read.

Reading Centers

While guided reading was keeping the teacher busy, the students were working in reading centers. They could choose from word study activities such as writing vocabulary words with shoestrings or macaroni and spaghetti. Listening centers had pre-recorded books and vocabulary

words on the language master (this machine reads a card when it is inserted). Computers had reading or math games on them for the students to play or take tests of Accelerated Reading (a program that gives quizzes for selected books in the classroom). The reading center included a library, "read the room" by which the students use a pointing stick to read words all over the room, a poem box, and commercially made reading-language games.

Presentation and Analysis of Results

In order to assess the effects of the four component intervention strategies upon reading improvement, it was first necessary to determine a baseline of the students' abilities and reading levels. Pretests and posttests were administered to the students to measure growth in the areas of word study, comprehension, fluency, and writing. The same pretests were again used as the posttests. To access the effects that the intervention strategies had on word study, the Inventory Readiness Vocabulary test was given again as a post test to Classrooms A and B. These are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Inventory Readiness Vocabulary

	Pretest Percentage of Correct Answers	Posttest Percentage of Correct Answers
Classroom A	70	91
Classroom B	91	99

In Table 3, the first grade students were tested at the beginning and end of the intervention period on twenty kindergarten vocabulary words. The average correct for Classroom A was 70 percent at the beginning of the year and 91 percent at the end of the intervention strategy. Classroom A had an increase of 21 percent. This shows that they have improved memory

retention of the vocabulary words. Classroom B had an average of 91 percent at the beginning and 99 percent at the end. Classroom B increased 8 percent. As expected, improvement was limited due to the high scores on the pretest. All but one child demonstrated 100 percent mastery. The most common mistake the students made was reading the word on backwards.

Table 4 represents the pretest and posttest for recognition of the 26 alphabet letters.

Table 4

Letter Recognition Test

	Pretest Percentage of correct answers	Posttest Percentage of correct answers
Classroom A	92	100
Classroom B	99	100

Table 4 represents the correct percentage of letters identified in the two classrooms. Both classrooms scored 100 percent at the conclusion of the sixteen-week intervention and have mastered letter recognition.

Table 5 represents the pretests and posttests for the 26 letter phonemes. The students were shown a letter. Then they provided the sound for the letter. Only short vowels and consonants were tested.

Table 5

Letter Phoneme Test

	Pretest Percentage of correct answers	Posttest Percentage of correct answers
Classroom A	83	91
Classroom B	94	99

In Table 5 Classroom A and B showed some gains for letter phonemes. Some of the possible reasons for possible errors are type writer letters are different from the familiar D'Nealian font used in the district, letter reversals, and distinguishing short vowel sounds.

Classroom C took the STAR Reading computer program test at the beginning of the year and again at the end of the research period. This test determined the students' reading levels. The multiple-choice test, which is in a fill in the blank sentence format, continues to test the students until the student reaches a frustration level has been reached. The results are shown in Figure 6.

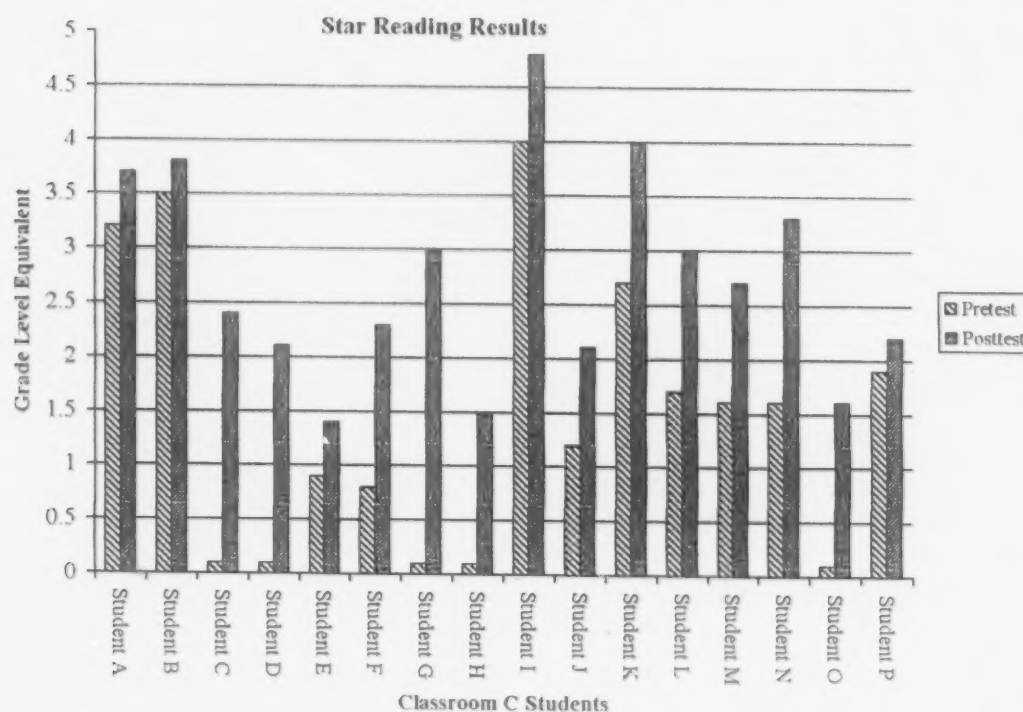


Figure 6. Star Reading Results

The first administration of the Star reading test showed that of the sixteen students involved in the research, four were reading at 0.1, one at 0.4, one at 0.8, one at 0.9, one at 1.2, two at 1.6, one at 1.9, one at 2.7, one at 3.2, one at 3.3, one at 3.5, one at 4.0.

The test given at the end of the research period showed no students at the kindergarten levels. One student is reading at 1.4, one at 1.5, one at 1.6, two at 2.1, one at 2.2, one at 2.3, one at 2.4, one at 2.7, two at 3.0, one at 3.3, one at 3.7, one at 3.8, one at 4.0, and one at 4.8.

After the first test, three-fourths of the students scored below grade level and one-fourth scored above grade level. None of the students scored at grade level. After the second test, one-half of the students scored below grade level. One-half scored above grade level. Meaningful growth was shown by one-fourth of the students who had scored below grade level in September now scored above grade level. These results can be attributed to the intense reading instruction and activities of the four components. A wide variety of activities were used each week to develop reading and comprehension skills.

Students were given another personal inventory questionnaire related to the number of minutes spent reading weekly at home. These results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6

Average Minutes Read Weekly At Home

	September Minutes	January Minutes
Classroom A	95	127
Classroom B	135	186
Classroom C	145	225

The table shows that students read for pleasure more now than at the beginning of the intervention period. On an average, Classroom A has gained 32 minutes a week per person. Classroom B gained 51 minutes a week per person. Classroom C showed the most gain with 80 minutes a week per person. The teacher-researchers believe that the probable reasons why the minutes have increased over the intervention period are that students have more interest in reading, are more capable of reading, and are involved in a school-wide reading incentive program.

Content sentence(s) written by the students access the effects of the intervention writing strategies. The criteria involved writing about the subject matter and using complete sentence(s) with correct capitalization and punctuation. Table 7 represents the data collected.

Table 7

Writing Samples

Content Writing Areas	Number of Students Successful					
	Classroom A		Classroom B		Classroom C	
	Sept.	Jan.	Sept.	Jan.	Sept.	Jan.
Subject Matter	12	13	12	12	16	16
Complete Thought	12	13	10	11	12	13
Capitalization	8	13	9	12	13	16
Punctuation	10	11	3	6	15	16

When asked to write successfully about the subject matter, Classrooms A and B had a gain of one student. Classroom C did not have any gains because the skill was mastered. When asked to write in complete sentences, Classrooms A, B, and C all had a gain of one student. When asked to use correct capitalization, Classroom A had a gain of five students; Classrooms B and C had a gain of three students. When asked to use correct punctuation, Classrooms A and C had a gain

of one student. Classroom B had a gain of three students. The teacher researchers believe that mechanics are more difficult to remember and implement. When writing complete thoughts about a given subject, the ideas flow onto the paper and mechanics are easily forgotten. Classroom A and C have seemed to learn the self-editing strategy that was used during the intervention time. Classroom B needs more work on this skill.

One-minute fluency timings were done at the students' different reading levels. The students read aloud for one minute. The teacher recorded the number of words correct. These are presented in Table 8.

Table 8

Average One-minute Fluency Timings

	Number of Words Read per Minute	
	Pretest	Post test
Classroom A	27	53
Classroom B	33	76
Classroom C	89	119

As a result of the first timings, Classroom A read an average of 27 words per minute. They increased to 53 words per minute during the posttest. Classroom B read an average of 33 words per minute during the first timing and increased to 76 words per minute during the posttest. Classroom C read an average of 89 words per minute during the pre test and increased to 119 words per minute during the posttest. The teacher researchers believe that the benefits of the four component reading program was responsible for the direct effect that increased the students' average number of words read per minute.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the presentation and analysis of the data gathered to measure an increase in the students' reading abilities, the students showed marked improvement. Although reading improvement is expected in any classroom, students in Classrooms A, B, and C did appear to benefit from and enjoy the four-component approach. This could be seen as the students were completely engaged in their learning. Their heads were close together and lively discussions and interactions were taking place.

In word study, students were exposed to more diverse activities that engaged them in the areas of vocabulary, spelling, and phonics. The many partner and group interactions allowed a sharing and discussion of skills between students. Their diverse learning styles were better met with the large group, small group, and center instruction. The addition of visual aides such as graphic organizers clarified information, organized it for the students, and made it easier for them to retrieve and use.

Comprehension activities helped students draw on prior knowledge, sequence events, make inferences, draw conclusions, and find main ideas and supporting details. Using the four component approach ensured that time was given to address the area of comprehension. Often in small group activities, the students were better able to express what they had learned with their peers.

Fluency increased during the intervention period due to the many opportunities the four component approach provided. Students read orally every day in pairs, to inanimate objects, or in groups. Silent reading added to their fluency when done during DEAR time and with guided reading materials or books of the students' own choosing. In all of the classrooms, teacher-

researchers noted that nearly all students were actively engaged in reading activities when given the time. The increase of words read per minute supported this.

Finally, the writing component enabled students to reflect upon what they had learned and share it with others through their writing. At the beginning of the intervention time, students were afraid to write their ideas. The teacher-researchers noted that many opportunities through writing and illustrating gave the students the ability to write without fear and express their opinions or ideas. Upon completion most were able to express themselves in writing. Although the mechanics still needed more emphasis, the ideas were more in depth and complete.

In addition, the teacher-researchers found one of the most beneficial enhancements of the four-component reading program was guided reading. Small groups of students progressed better when given material at their own instructional level along with the weekly reading story. Errors and miscues were immediately addressed as they occurred. Then mini-lessons on these errors were taught to these students. The individual attention given each student would be more difficult to give during whole class instruction.

Reading centers provided time for the students to engage in activities that reinforced skills and strategies necessary for reading. The nature of these centers allowed students to learn at their own pace, work at their developmentally appropriate level, and use various learning styles.

It is the recommendation of the teacher-researchers to continue the implementation of the four-component program. This program intensively engages the students in the skills necessary to become fluent readers and in the abilities to interpret and comprehend stories.

Perhaps the greatest drawback to implementing the four-component reading program is the time involved. Ideally, twenty to thirty minutes of time should be spent daily for each

component. This was somewhat difficult for the teacher/researchers because of music and physical education schedules, which interrupted the reading time.

This was also difficult to implement without an educational assistant. It would be helpful to have an assistant to help guide the students during centers and to work the students through problems that arise while the teacher is working with a guided reading group.

Another drawback is the length of the study. Sixteen weeks is not enough time to see dramatic improvements. The teacher-researchers of the first grade classrooms believe that a longer period of time for the project would have shown greater results. First graders show the greatest growth at the latter part of the year.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Writing Sample Checklist

Content Writing

pts. (1 point for each area done correctly)

1. Is it about the subject matter?	_____	4 points - Excellent
2. Are the sentences complete thoughts?	_____	3 points - Good
3. Used capital letters at beginning of sentence.	_____	2 points - Fair
4. Used correct punctuation marks.	_____	1 point - Poor
		0 points - Unsatisfactory

Total pts. _____

Appendix B

Fluency Timing Materials

Wet Walk By: Cass Hollander

So how did Rosita get wet?

She put on her raincoat. Good for her!

She put on her boots. Good for her!

She got under her umbrella. Good for her!

She jumped across the puddles. Good for her!

Oops! Too bad! So that's how Rosita got wet!

The Game

On Monday we wanted to play a game.	But no one came.
What a shame!	
On Tuesday we wanted to play.	Just one boy came.
James was his name.	
On Wednesday we wanted to play a game.	We lost the ball.
Who was to blame?	
On Thursday we wanted to play a game.	Along came a dog.
He wasn't tame!	
On Friday we wanted to play a game.	We had new clothes.
They were not the same!	
On Saturday we wanted to play a game.	We started to play.
It started to rain!	
On Sunday we wanted to play a game.	Everyone came.
We played the game!	

Passages-Primer Level #2

"My yellow kitten has run away, Father," the little girl said. "I saw the kitten at home but now she is not there." "No," said Father. "He did not run away. A boy came and put the kitten in a box. I saw the boy take your kitten. I went to stop the boy but he ran away. I will help you find your kitten," Father said. "I know where the boy put your pet. Come with me," said Father. "We will find your kitten." The father and the girl went on a train. Soon they came to Mr. White's farm. Mr. White said, "Yes, I have your kitten. Please, go in the house and get your pet." The little girl went in the house. She saw the pet kitten. But what a surprise, she saw Mother, too. A boy did not take the kitten away in a box. The kitten did not run away. Mother and Father took the kitten. It was for a surprise, a funny birthday surprise. "Now the box has three yellow kittens in it and one white duck," laughed the girl. "Thank you, Mother," she said. "Thank you, Father. Thank you Mr. White."

Appendix C
Time Spent Reading Survey

Name _____ Date _____

All About You!

You and Books

1. What books and magazines do you have at home?

2. Do you use the library in the summer?

3. What kinds of books or stories do you like?

4. Do you like to have someone read to you?

5. Do you like to read to others?

6. How much time is spent weekly on reading at home?

Appendix D
Inventory Checklist

Name _____

Kindergarten sight words

Said	is	we	my
To	in	I	you
This	on	a	an
Can	has	they	will
Like	about	the	and

Letter Identification

v	s	p	m	j	g	d	a	z	w	t
q	n	k	h	e	b	x	c	f	i	l
o	r	u	x	y						

Letter Sound

v	s	p	m	j	g	d	a	z	w	t
q	n	k	h	e	b	x	c	f	i	l
o	r	u	x	y						

Appendix E

Weekly Reading Plan Outline

Action Plan for 4 Component Reading Improvement

Week No. _____ Date _____ Story Title _____

Word Study	Comprehension	Fluency	Writing
Spelling words	Pre-reading	Modeled reading	Letter Formation
Phonics/Decoding	Active reading	Paired Oral Reading	Daily Oral Lang.
Vocabulary	Post-reading	Silent reading	Style: Expository Narrative Persuasive
Word Wall	Guided reading	Guided reading	Journals
Language		Repeated readings	Content Prompt
		Choral reading	Creative

Notes: